

Program Overview – Museums for America

Museums for America (MFA) grants support projects that strengthen the ability of an individual museum to serve its public.

Distinguishing features of successful MFA projects are:

- *Institutional Impact:* Projects address a key goal identified in an institution's strategic plan.
- *In-depth Knowledge:* Proposals reflect a thorough understanding of current practice and knowledge about the subject matter.
- *Project-based Design:* Work plans consist of a set of logical, interrelated activities tied directly to addressing the key need or challenge identified in the proposal.
- *Demonstrable Results:* Projects generate measurable results that tie directly to the need or challenge it was designed to address.

There are three project categories within the MFA grant program:

Learning Experiences

IMLS supports the unique ability of museums to empower people of all ages through experiential learning and discovery. Successful projects provide high-quality, inclusive educational opportunities that address particular audience needs.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Interpretive and educational program development and delivery
- Exhibition development, design, and fabrication
- Digital media development, design, and delivery
- Digitization activities designed to enhance a learning project
- Publication research, design, and printing
- Training for staff, volunteers, and educators

Community Anchors

IMLS promotes the role of museums as essential partners in addressing the needs of their communities by leveraging their expertise, knowledge, physical space, technology, and other resources. These projects strive to create a better quality of life within communities.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Forums for community dialogue
- Community-driven exhibitions and programs
- Audience development and community outreach
- Community-focused planning activities
- Audience research and evaluation
- Training for staff, volunteers, and interns in community outreach and engagement

Collections Stewardship

IMLS supports exemplary management, care, and conservation of museum collections. Projects address a clearly articulated and well-documented need and contribute to the long-term preservation of materials entrusted to the museum's care.

Projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Planning for collections management, care, and conservation
- Cataloguing, inventorying, documenting, and registration
- Developing and enhancing collections databases
- Digitization activities designed to improve collections management
- Conservation surveys
- Conservation treatment
- Rehousing collections
- Environmental improvements for collections storage and exhibit areas
- Training of staff, volunteers, and interns in collections management, care, and/or conservation